



30 DAYS  
*to your*  
BEST YEAR  
EVER!

DAVID CERULLO

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# God's Word to YOU today. . .

*“I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for. When you call on Me, when you come and pray to Me, I’ll listen. When you come looking for Me, you’ll find Me. Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I’ll make sure you won’t be disappointed...*

***“I’ll turn things around for you.”***

– Jeremiah 29:11-14 The Message



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DAY 1

# Your Most Important Resolution



Whenever a new year begins, I think of the beautiful prayer of the Apostle John in 3 John 1:2: *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”*

That’s my hope and prayer for you. I pray that you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers. I pray that through this booklet you will discover and put into practice the wisdom from God’s Word to make THIS YEAR your BEST YEAR yet!

At the start of every new year, people make all kinds of resolutions—starting an exercise routine...getting out of debt...losing some weight...strengthening relationships. These are all well and good, but there’s another resolution I encourage you to put at the very top of your list today:

Resolve that in the coming months you will develop a more intimate personal relationship with the Lord! Everything else I will share with you in this book hinges on that. It begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

No matter what season of life you've been in recently, God wants you to develop a firm spiritual foundation so you can confidently stand when you are buffeted by the storms of life. Don't wait until you see the storm clouds start to gather before you decide you need a strong relationship with the Lord!

Although it may seem like it's a long way off, your springtime is just around the corner. God offers you a springtime of greater vision, deeper roots, and more powerful answers to prayer. The more difficult your winter season has been, the greater your coming harvest can be!

As you trust God and persevere through the winter season, this year can be your best year yet. A year filled with new joy...new peace...and new victory in Christ. Don't give up!

God is challenging you today: "Forget the past. Forget the failures. Forget the mistakes. Just

come and walk closely with Me, and you will walk in triumph and abundance.”

He is such a loving God!

Am I promising that this year will always be easy? Not at all! The storms of life will continue to blow from time to time...in your life...in your family...in your nation...and in the world.

However, you can resolve to build your life's foundation on the firm ground of Christ's love and faithfulness. Then when storms hit, you won't collapse but will stand firm in the knowledge, safety, and protection of your Lord and Savior.

My friend, don't wait until there's a crisis and then run to Jesus, pleading, "Save me from this situation!" Instead, call upon the Lord NOW. Get to know Him better, and learn to hear the voice of His Holy Spirit. If you do this, you can be confident of victory no matter what adversity might come your way.





DAY 2

## Begin with a Clean Slate



The best way to have a new beginning is to start with a clean slate. Everyone who has ever lived has had a need for God's forgiveness, because everyone has fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23).

God's forgiveness is a *gift*. It's not something you can buy or earn.

God sent His Son to pay the penalty for your sins. By the shed blood of Jesus, the total price for your salvation was paid. Jesus came that you would have an abundant life. He came to make a great exchange with you...to take your sins and in exchange give you His righteousness. To take your anxiousness and give you His peace. To take your loneliness and depression and give you His joy and companionship in a personal relationship with Him. No man can give you this, no church and no religion. Only Jesus can.



It's easy to receive that great exchange. All you have to do is believe in your heart that Jesus is the Son of God. Ask Him to forgive your sins and He will. Ask Him to become the Lord of your life and begin a new, fantastic relationship with Him!

If you've never turned over your life to Jesus Christ, we encourage you to take a few minutes right now to do just that. It's simple. Open your heart's door wide to Christ and pray this simple prayer:

*Lord Jesus, thank You for dying for my sins so I can be forgiven and can have a personal relationship with You. I believe You are the Son of God and that God raised You from the dead. I turn from my own ways and ask You to come into my heart and be the Lord of my life. I surrender my thoughts and actions to You. Please give me the clean slate and abundant life You promise.*

If you prayed this prayer with a sincere heart,

the Bible says you are born again and well on your way to making this your best year yet!

Now this doesn't necessarily mean that every area of your life instantly changes when you become a Christian.

While it's true that dramatic and immediate changes do happen when some people invite Jesus to come in and be the Lord of their life, many others discover that for them true and lasting change in their lives is a *process*. For example, in Romans 12:2 Paul says you are "*transformed by the renewing of your mind.*"

This process of transformation begins when you first repent and turn from your sins, but Paul is addressing his statement to many Believers who have already walked with the Lord for quite a while. The message is clear: Your mind will steadily be renewed as you make a daily commitment to study and obey God's Word, and as you allow His Holy Spirit to shape your thoughts and actions.

So whether you've been a Christian for decades or you just asked Him into your life, we all need a clean slate and we're all a "work in progress." But remember this great promise from

Proverbs 4:18 (NASB): *“The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter until the full day.”*

As your new beginning gets underway, God wants the light of your testimony to grow brighter and brighter until all can see the incredible transformation He has brought about in your life!





DAY 3

# See Things the Way God Sees Them



At the turn of every new year, millions of people are so happy that another year is over and they can begin again with a clean slate. Celebrating with their friends, they party the night away and inevitably make resolutions to change they will never really keep.

Is that really the way to make this your best year yet? No! Of course not! Instead of making real changes, it's simply an old form of insanity: doing the same thing over and over, but expecting different results!

Most New Year's resolutions are just counterfeit commitments. Lots of talk but little action. Lots of desire but little passionate pursuit. Usually people make a temporary effort to change but they don't follow through long term with a

real commitment. Half-hearted resolutions won't work. If you want this year to be great you need to adapt a behavior of discipline and pursuit.

On the spiritual side of life, a lasting transformation always begins with repentance. Repentance simply means "to change your mind...to change the way you think...to see things the way God sees them." Repentance involves a firm decision to allow God to rule over your thoughts, attitudes, and actions. It means turning from Satan's lies to embracing God's truth.

The test of repentance, ultimately, is FRUIT. What fruit is growing on the tree of your life? John the Baptist wasn't overly impressed when some of the religious leaders came to him for baptism. Rather, he challenged them in Matthew 3:8 to "*bear fruits worthy of repentance.*" When you've truly repented, your life will change and you'll begin to see things the way God sees them. You'll make different choices and the tree of your life will start to grow different fruit.

We see a similar scene in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit was poured out and Peter preached to the crowd gathered for the Day of Pentecost.

Many in the crowd were deeply moved by Peter's message, and they cried out, "*What shall we do?*" (v. 37).

Perhaps that's the question you're asking yourself right now. "What am I supposed to do to make this year better than any I've had before? What should I do to get started?"

Look at Peter's answer to the crowd in Acts 2:38-40:

*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*

*And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."*

If you want this to be your best year yet your first step is to repent and receive God's forgiveness



and the empowerment of His Spirit. Don't let this "*perverse generation*" tell you what is good and what is evil. See things the way God sees them!

NOTES

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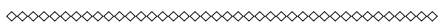
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DAY 4

## The Choice Is Yours



Years ago I heard God speak to me these compelling words: “If you want to change your future, change your choices!”

Think about that for a moment. The decisions you make today will impact everything about your tomorrow. You are and will become the sum total of your choices in life—whether for good or bad. If you make better choices today they will lead to a better life tomorrow.

From the moment of creation God gave people an awesome life-changing power—the power to choose. Instead of making us puppets with strings that He pulled, He gave us a free will to make our own choices. We have the responsibility to choose between God and Satan, life or death, wisdom or folly, obedience or sin. What an awesome responsibility!

Not only will your decisions affect your

future on earth, they will also determine where—and how—you will spend eternity.

Preacher and political candidate William Jennings Bryan once said: “Destiny is not a matter of chance; it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for; it is a thing to be achieved.”

One of the most important Scripture passages in the Bible is found in Deuteronomy 30:15-20. These words are as true and important for you today as they were when God first spoke them to the children of Israel.

*See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away,*

*and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.*

*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.*

My friend, choose life and prosperity, choose to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments. These choices will bring you life and blessing. The consequences of not making

these right choices are that you will perish. These are hard words, but they come from the heart of a loving Father who wants to bless you, and He knows what's best for you.

So the Lord would say to you today, choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants. How? By loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days.

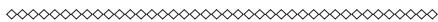






DAY 5

## Be Bold and Courageous



The Christian life is a life of faith, and sometimes it takes courage and boldness to obey God's plan for your life. In the book of Numbers chapter 13 is the story of the 12 spies Moses sent to spy out the Promised Land.

Twelve men were chosen to go into to the land of Canaan for a firsthand look at the Promised Land. Ten returned saying, *"There we saw the giants...and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight"* (v. 33).

Only two of the 12 spies, Joshua and Caleb, reported a land filled with milk and honey. They told Moses, *"Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it"* (v. 30).

Despite the apparent obstacles, these two men of faith believed that God would deliver the land and the people into their hands if they obeyed God.

Ten of the spies brought a fear-filled report. In essence, they said, “We saw giants in the land. There is no way we can take this country.” Their fear and lack of faith struck terror into the hearts of the children of Israel.

For some reason these 10 spies had forgotten how God miraculously delivered His people from the land of Egypt, sending plagues against the Egyptians...opening the Red Sea and swallowing up Pharaoh and his army...feeding His people supernaturally as they journeyed in the wilderness...bringing water gushing out of a rock enough for three million people in the desert to have water enough to drink...and even preventing the sandals on their feet from wearing out.

Instead of remembering these marvelous things God had done for them, they chose to let fear rule their hearts and choices. They spread a negative report—they doubted God and His ability to drive out the inhabitants of the land He had told them to enter.

On the doorstep of the Promised Land, all 12 of the spies saw the giants. But while the 10 fearful spies viewed themselves as grasshoppers, the

other two spies saw God's power and faithfulness!

My friend, never allow fear and doubt to rule your heart, or your decisions. Don't be like the people of Israel, who doubted God and His abilities and chose to believe the grasshopper report. The consequence of their faithlessness was that God allowed them to wander aimlessly in the wilderness for 40 years until the entire generation of grumbling, complaining, faithless, fearful people had died out.

Today, lift up your eyes to see the Lord going before you, and believe He will do what He says He will do. Put your faith and confidence in Him and His ability to bring to pass His promises in your life and the decisions He sets before you. He has a plan, and a place of promise and fulfillment for you and your life.





DAY 6

## Walk through the Valley



This may sound harsh, but if you don't like the place where you find yourself today, don't blame your spouse...your children...your church... pastor...job...boss...age...race...education...or even the devil! For this year to be your best year yet you will need to accept responsibility for the decisions that have brought you to this place you find yourself in.

Today, think of where you are as your location, not your destination! Just as King David said in Psalm 23: "*I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*" (v. 4).

My friend, you need to "*walk through*" your present location...

- If you're going through a winter season in your life, you can pass through to springtime.

- If you have a strained relationship in your marriage or with your children, God can help you pass through to healthy relationships.
- If you're experiencing financial struggles, God wants you to break through to His prosperity.
- If you're walking through a time of illness in your body, God wants to touch you with His healing power.
- If you find yourself depressed or lonely, God can give you His peace and joy.

Whatever difficult situation you may be “*walking through*” today, remember that it’s only your present location—not your destination. Don’t quit walking! Keep on trusting the Lord! Don’t stop until you’ve reached the other side.

You’ve probably known many people who “camp out” in their valleys instead of walking through. Instead of trusting and praising the Lord, they wallow in their circumstances and hold a pity party.

The psalmist writes in Psalm 84:

*Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength (vs. 5-7).*

We all have “valleys” and painful experiences along the roads of life—and we all have choices to make about how we will respond. We can moan and groan and blame someone else, but the fact remains: We probably have come to our present location largely because of the choices we’ve made.

So why not make the choice today for this year to be different? You’ll be glad you did!







DAY 7

## The Second Question



There was never a question as to God's authority or His ability to create the heavens and the earth. He simply spoke...and His words were so full of life, so powerful, so unquestionable that everything He spoke came into being immediately.

But the first question in the Bible came as Satan planted seeds of doubt and questioned the integrity of God's Word:

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" (Genesis 3:1).*

Satan's initial question didn't directly call God a liar, but that was soon to follow.

*And the woman said to the serpent,*

*“We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’”*

*Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil” (vs. 2-5).*

The second question in the Bible is one that has been repeated again and again throughout the centuries: *“Where are you?”* This is the question God asked Adam in Genesis 3:9 when Adam was hiding in the bushes—and the Lord continues to ask us this same question today.

Make no mistake about it, God knows exactly where we are! He wasn't looking for missing persons when He asked Adam and Eve, *“Where are you?”* He knew where they were hiding, but He wanted them to understand the full ramifications of what they had done. God wanted them to experience the painful realization that they were

now alienated from Him. He wanted them to see that they were accountable for their actions.

Just as He asked Adam and Eve, the Lord is asking you today: “*Where are you?*” How are you going to answer Him? Are you walking right beside Him, or are you hiding somewhere behind the “*bushes*” of denial and blame-shifting?

When the Lord asks that question, many people choose the route Adam tried: blame-shifting. Adam replied, “*The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate*” (v. 12).

Instead of taking any responsibility himself, Adam blamed God because He brought Eve into his life, and he blamed Eve for giving him the forbidden fruit. Meanwhile, Eve blamed the serpent (v. 13). But God didn’t buy any of their excuses. He wanted Adam and Eve to see that their predicament was brought about as a result of choices they had made.

Take some time and think about the choices you’ve made in your life, both good and bad. Look for God moving in the middle of them and ask Him for wisdom.





DAY 8

## Set Your Mind in the Right Place



Victory in the Christian life isn't automatic. God offers us His supernatural power, but we also have choices to make in order to appropriate that power.

Paul tells us in Romans 8:6 (NASB): “*The mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace.*” That means you need to choose where you “set” your mind. In other words what you think about...what occupies your thoughts. Even as Believers, we have a daily decision to make about whether we'll listen to the voice of God or the voice of the enemy.

Paul says in Philippians 4:8:

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever*

*things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy— meditate on these things.*

You see, there's a choice you must make. You can determine what to focus your mind on. Your mind should be your servant, not your master.

So, I want to ask you this: Does your mind dictate to you what it thinks about? Or do you dictate to your mind what it thinks about? Where you set your mind will determine your attitudes and behaviors. Either on the flesh or on the Spirit.

Galatians 5:19-21 tells us that the “*deeds of the flesh*” are ugly and displeasing to God:

*The works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like.*

If these are the qualities that characterize your life today, I have one word for you: STOP! Galatians 5:22-23 offers you a great contrast:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love,  
joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,  
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness,  
self-control.*

Which will you choose? The deeds of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit? It's all a matter of your choices and where you set your mind and heart. To let your fleshly nature control your thinking is death, but to let the Holy Spirit control the way you think produces life and peace.







DAY 9

## Let Forgiveness Set You Free



In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus tells a sobering story about a man who was forgiven from a huge debt, but who refused to forgive someone who owed him a much smaller amount. The man who had owed the large debt came to his master and pled for mercy. The master was gracious to him. Verse 27 says, *“Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.”*

This is exactly what the Lord has done for YOU through Jesus’ death on the cross...

- He showed His love for you.
- He forgave your debt of sin.
- He released you from the prison of your past.

Unfortunately, though, this story doesn't have a happy ending. This man who received such mercy refused to forgive someone else who owed him a very small debt. Verses 28-30 tell us,

*But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me what you owe!" So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you all." And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.*

Notice that forgiving others is a *choice*, not a feeling. When asked for mercy, he was unwilling to give it. Even though he had been forgiven from his own large debt, he chose not to forgive his fellow servant a small debt and instead had the other man put in prison.

The master of the first servant was irate when he heard about this, and we learn the rest

of the story in verses 32-33:

*Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?"*

The master's anger resulted in terrible consequences for the man who refused to forgive.

*And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.*

Jesus ends this story with a pointed warning about the consequences of unforgiveness.

*So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.*

Jesus' story says those who hold on to unforgiveness will be handed over to "torturers." Other translations say "tormenters" or "jailers."

If you find yourself in a place of torment

today, God wants you to be set free. But the key to unlocking the door that holds you in your prison is in your own hand. I encourage you to get away for some time with the Lord, asking Him to work His forgiveness in your heart. As long as it takes, spend time choosing to forgive each person who has hurt you. Tear up every “IOU,” and release them from their debts.

You can't afford to allow unforgiveness to keep you from experiencing your best year ever!





DAY 10

## Stand in Faith



It saddens me that many sincere believers come SO close to their breakthrough, only to give up too soon. Galatians 6:9 encourage us, *“Let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”*

In Luke chapter 18, Jesus tells a powerful story about a woman who probably was tempted to lose heart and give up. She desperately needed things in her life to change, but she was discouraged when it didn't seem to be coming. Can you identify with those feelings? Does it sometimes seem like God isn't answering your prayers? Are you 10 days into this new year wondering when it's all going to start to change? That's how this woman felt.

There are three characters in this story. There's the woman, who represents us and our need for a change. There's the judge, who represents God.

And there's the woman's adversary, which represents the seemingly insurmountable problem. As Jesus was telling this parable He said, this is how you are to approach your Heavenly Father.

The word *adversary* means "opponent," and your opponent could be any number of things. Your adversary could be sickness...a financial problem...a legal problem...or maybe a difficult marriage, or a son or daughter who's going through a hard time.

Whatever your adversary might be, it's easy to lose heart. But when you're tempted to feel like that, remember the words of Jesus: "*Take your case to the judge.*" This means releasing your problems to God!

First John 2:1 tells us we have "*an Advocate*" with God the Father. An advocate is a person who pleads someone else's case, somewhat like an attorney. Jesus says He is our Advocate with the "judge" in Heaven...our Father, God. What better attorney could you or I possibly ask for?

This story teaches us that the key to this woman's turnaround was her persistence. The judge got so tired of this woman badgering him



day after day after day that he had to stop and respond to her case. We also see that as long as we battle our opponents in our own strength, we're going to become tired and worn out. But everything changes when we go to the judge!

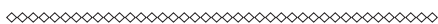
My friend, God has the power to solve your problem. He has the power to defeat your opponent. He has the power to turn your life around and give you your best year yet. But it's crucial that you persevere until the breakthrough comes. Stand in faith. Don't give up!





DAY 11

## Let God Search Your Heart



In Psalm 139:23-24 King David prayed,  
*“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me,  
and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked  
way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

My wife Barbara and I once spent time with a pastor friend of ours who mentioned that he goes away for a few days each month to spend time with the Lord. We asked him what he did on these personal retreats, and he told us he always starts by asking the Lord to show him anyone he hadn't forgiven yet. Our friend shared that on one of these retreats, he spent three whole days forgiving people who had wronged him!

Like this pastor, don't just assume you've forgiven people who have hurt you. You may need to spend some time asking God to search your

heart. If you're still talking about the offense—months or even years after it occurred—it's likely that you still have some forgiving to do.

Take time today to allow the Lord to search your heart and remove any “hurtful way” or unforgiveness that is keeping you imprisoned to your past.

I once heard a story about a mom who baked some chocolate chip cookies for her young son. “Tommy,” she told him, “I’m putting the cookies in the cookie jar, but you’ll have to wait until after dinner to have some.”

Of course, Tommy couldn't wait for this special treat. While his mom was in the other room, Tommy opened the cookie jar and reached in to grab a few big cookies. However, when he tried to remove his hand, he discovered his hand had gotten stuck in the jar.

Tommy began to cry and then screamed to his mom, “HELP! I’M TRAPPED!”

When Tommy's mom ran into the room, she saw that his hand was stuck, and he was sobbing hysterically. She decided the only option was

to break open the cookie jar so he could get his hand out. When she broke the jar, Tommy's mom was shocked to discover he was still clutching three cookies in his little hand. "Tommy, why didn't you let go of the cookies?!" she asked in amazement.

"But I wanted them!" Tommy replied as he broke into tears again.

To make this your best year yet you may need to let go of some "cookies" you've held on to. God wants to set you free from anything that has bound you and hindered you, but you need to let go.

Like Tommy, you may be tempted to protest that the cookies you're grasping are something desirable and good—not something negative. But remember that anything is negative if it keeps us from God's best for our life. Paul says in Philippians 3:7 (NIV), "*Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.*"

Today God offers you freedom, but to experience that freedom from your past, from those who have hurt you, from the memories that have tormented you, you have to let go of those

things. Let go of anything holding you back from your spiritual freedom in Jesus Christ. Once you truly let go, you'll be amazed by how quickly things will change.





DAY 12

# Honor God



The dictionary's first definition of *honor* is giving great respect. So how do we show honor to God?

There are 134 verses in the Bible that talk about honor. Here are just a few:

*You shall rise before the gray-headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord (Leviticus 19:32).*

*Those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed (1 Samuel 2:30-31).*

*Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine (Proverbs 3:9-10).*



Proverbs 3:9-10 is one of the most important passages in the Bible describing how to be blessed by God and receive His favor. Honor Him, show Him respect and obey His commandments and statutes to bring Him the “first fruits” of all your wealth. That means when you get a paycheck the first 10% belongs to the Lord, not what’s left over (“if” anything is left over). No. Honor Him with the *first* 10% of all you earn.

This is one of those “if this, then that” conditions. “*If*” you honor God with your wealth, with the first 10% of your paycheck, “*then*” your barns (your bank accounts) will be filled with plenty.

Here are two more verses about honor:

*He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor* (Proverbs 21:21).

This shows that “*if*” you pursue righteousness, “*then*” you will find life and honor.

*A man’s pride will bring him low, but the humble in spirit will retain honor* (Proverbs 29:23).

One of the easiest ways to honor God is this:

Obey His commandments, keep His statutes.  
You show honor to the Lord by doing what He  
asks. You dishonor Him by disobeying Him.

If you honor Him, He will honor you. Honor  
will lead you to favor, and favor will open wide  
the gates of His blessings in your life, making  
this your best year yet!





DAY 13

## The Three-Legged Stool



For this year to be your best year ever, it needs to have a proper spiritual foundation. One of the best illustrations is a simple three-legged stool. If you take away just one of those legs, you'll have a hard time to keep from falling over. If you take away two of the three legs, the best you can hope for is to somehow balance yourself on the remaining leg so you don't fall. With all three legs gone, you don't have a stool anymore—you're simply sitting flat on the floor, wondering what happened!

In the same way, many Christians today are missing one or more “legs” in their spiritual “stool.” They wonder why they struggle to remain upright and balanced. They may even try to decorate or paint their stool to improve its appearance, but the ability to balance will still be dismal unless all three legs are intact.

We could make a long list of important things that would help bring balance to your spiritual life, but I believe there are three vital legs you can't do without in your spiritual life if you want to be balanced and grow spiritually this year. These three are absolutely essential, requiring you to spend time daily in...

1. Praise and Worship
2. Reading the Word of God
3. Prayer and Intercession

If all three of these are in proper operation in your life, you will be spiritually strong and balanced, able to deal with the storms of life you encounter. But take away even ONE of these essential spiritual "legs," and you soon will find yourself faltering!

Embracing the three-legged stool will help you experience new spiritual strength, a more intimate relationship with the Lord, and a powerful new sense of God's presence and purpose.

God designed us to experience an intimate relationship with Him. In the book of Genesis, we read about how God walked with Adam and

Eve in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day, interacting and speaking face to face with them. Until Adam and Eve sinned, they enjoyed sweet, harmonious fellowship with the Lord each day.

In 1913, Austin Miles wrote a song that describes the wonderful, intimate relationship God wants to have with His children. The chorus of “In the Garden” says:

*And He walks with me and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own.  
And the joys we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.*

What an incredible picture of the kind of fellowship God wants to have with you. Staying seated on the “three-legged stool” this year will further that kind of intimacy, making you spiritually strong, stable, and victorious in your Christian life.





DAY 14

# Begin Your Day with Praise and Worship



Why is it so important to come into the presence of God through praise and worship? Because only in God's presence will you truly change...only in His presence will you find strength to overcome the attacks of the enemy.

Paul describes the path to transformation this way in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 (NIV):

*The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Everything you need can be found in God's



presence! Whether you need a physical healing... a financial breakthrough... freedom from fear, depression, and anxiety... or the restoration of a relationship with a loved one... your life and circumstances can be transformed in an instant!

Jacob experienced a powerful encounter with God's presence in Genesis 32:24-31. After spending time wrestling with Him, the Bible says Jacob's name was changed... his walk was changed... his outlook was changed... and even his DESTINY was changed! Instead of merely seeking the "Blessing," Jacob became a blessing!

Never underestimate the power of one moment in God's presence. That's where you must jump start your new beginning. And it's where you will be empowered to overcome the devil and fulfill God's purpose for your life.

King Jehoshaphat once faced seemingly insurmountable enemies, but in 2 Chronicles 20 the Lord told him, "*Don't be afraid... the battle is not yours, but Mine.*" So how did God instruct Jehoshaphat to win the battle? Through praise and worship! Here's how it's described in 2 Chronicles 20:21-22 (NIV):

*Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."*

*As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.*

Just as King Jehoshaphat learned, God can use our praise and worship as a powerful weapon to rout our spiritual enemies and give us overwhelming victory!

Praising and worshiping God causes us to surrender the things in our life that have brought us fear...frustration...anxiety...confusion...and pain. Through praise and worship, we recognize that He alone is able to solve our problems and transform our lives.

Worship lifts us UP and OUT of the things of this world and places us in the realm of God's Spirit. There the Lord showers us with His mercy,

love, and grace, and He confirms that HE'S IN CONTROL of everything!

What a wonderful experience and privilege it is to step out of our earthly cares and into the supernatural presence and provision of Almighty God!





DAY 15

## Eat Your Daily Bread



Every day, you need to take time for each of the three foundational legs of your spiritual stool—entering God’s presence to worship, studying His Word, and praying. Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew chapter 6. One of the parts of his prayer was this: *“Give us this day our DAILY bread.”*

When the children of Israel received manna in the wilderness, it never lasted for more than a day. God gave them enough for that day, but by the next day the manna was rotten. The story is told in Exodus chapter 16 (NIV).

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions” (v. 4).*

*However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them (v. 20).*

Did you ever wonder why the children of Israel couldn't collect enough manna for a month or even a week? The answer is simple: God wanted to teach them—and us—a valuable spiritual lesson. Instead of being dependent on our own strength and resources, He wants us to be dependent on Him to meet our needs on a daily basis!

One of the lessons I learned from my dad is this: "All truth is parallel." No one could survive in the natural world if they only ate once a week or once a month. Before long they would be dead. Yet many of God's children today are starving to death spiritually, and they don't even recognize it! They are spiritually weak and powerless because they have gone for days...weeks...months...or even years without spending quality time to nourish their lives with the Word of God!

Jesus warned in Matthew 4:4, "*It is written:*

*‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”*

Unless you regularly partake of this spiritual food, you will be malnourished and your relationship with God will wither. But as you feed daily on the Word of God this year you will be spiritually healthy, growing in maturity and strength.

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DAY 16

# Grow Strong through God's Word



God gives us so many wonderful promises about the power of reading, studying, meditating on, and obeying His Word. He says His Word brings us:

**Nourishment.** Hebrews 5:12-14 describes the teachings of God's Word as both milk and solid food—providing the spiritual nutrients we need in order to grow. The Bible is food that nourishes our spiritual life.

**Cleansing.** Romans 12:2 and Ephesians 5:26 tell us God's Word renews our minds and cleanses our hearts.

**Guidance.** God's Word shines a light on our pathway and shows us the right way to go! David says in Psalm 119:105, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

**Strength and security.** God's Word gives us strength for the day...strength to overcome the trials, tests, and difficult circumstances that come our way! Jesus tells us in Luke 6:47-48 (NIV):

*As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.*

**Fruitfulness.** God promises in Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 1:1-3 success and spiritual fruitfulness to those who meditate on His Word and obey it.

**Victory.** God's Word alerts us to Satan's schemes, and it serves as a two-edged sword to defeat him. When the devil came in the wilderness to tempt Jesus, it was the Word of God that Jesus used to overcome the attack. Jesus said to him: "*It is written...It is written...It is written!*"

In light of these fantastic promises, I encourage you to pause and do an honest assessment of whether your life is truly founded upon God's Word. Can you honestly say you're walking in the blessings God offers to those who study and obey His Word? If not, ask Him to show you any areas where you need to develop the discipline of obedience...so He can make this year a year of great blessing!

If you don't already have a daily habit of devotion to the three legs of your spiritual stool (worship, studying God's Word, and praying), then please stop what you're doing and ask yourself:

- What time and place are best for my daily appointment with God?

- What are some specific ways I can bolster each leg of my spiritual stool?

Once you've considered these questions, I encourage you to take a few minutes and write down what you've concluded. This will help you go from "wishful thinking" to a firm commitment to grow stronger in the Lord this year and the rest of your life.





DAY 17

## Powerful and Effective Prayers



The third leg of your “spiritual stool” is prayer. This is an indispensable key to making this your best year yet. Sadly, it’s sorely lacking in the lives of many of God’s people today.

There’s a common misconception that we only need to pray when we have a specific need. Yes, God does welcome our prayers in our times of trouble, but that’s only a small part of His purpose in giving us the privilege of prayer.

Instead of merely engaging in “crisis prayers,” the Lord wants us to develop a prayer life of daily communion and fellowship with Him. Without having this open and honest communication on a daily basis, we will end up knowing ABOUT God...without truly knowing HIM!

In Psalm 32:6 (NIV), David says to the Lord:

*“Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty waters will not reach them.”* The clear message in David’s prayer is that you shouldn’t wait until the storm hits before you start praying! Make sure you have a strong spiritual foundation before the flood waters arrive at your door!

Not everyone is called to be a preacher or a missionary in foreign lands, but everyone is called to pray! As a Christian, praying should be as natural and essential as breathing is for your physical bodies.

The Bible gives countless promises about the power God has given us through prayer. James 5:16 tells us that *“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much.”*

So why is it that many Christians neglect the kind of regular, disciplined prayer life that God calls us to? We could list a lot of reasons, but perhaps the primary ones are unbelief and laziness.

Jesus clearly links answered prayer to believing God’s promises:

*“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours” (Mark 11:22-24 NIV).*

When you truly pray in faith, you “see” the answer to your prayer even before it actually arrives. As Jesus tells us in Matthew 19:26, *“With God all things are possible.”*

James, likewise, encourages Believers to *“ask in faith without any doubting,”* for the person who doubts *“ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord”* (James 1:6-7 NASB).

God wants you to believe His promises are true...and for YOU when you pray!







DAY 18

## We're in This Together



Each of the elements of the “three-legged stool” is meant to bring you into a stronger and more intimate relationship with God. Nothing is more important than these in helping you make this year your best year yet.

However, the relationships you have with PEOPLE are also important to the success of your Christian life. When more than 3,000 people were saved after Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, one of the first things these new converts did was find fellowship with other Believers.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:46 (NIV) tells us:

*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They*

*broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts.*

The word “fellowship” is the Greek word *koinonia*, which means to have something in common, to share, or to have communion with each other. Those who are walking in fellowship with Christ are meant to share that relationship with other Believers.

Some might question the value of fellowship with other Christians. “David, isn’t my relationship with God all I need?” they ask. “The ‘three-legged stool’ is helping me grow in my intimacy with the Lord, but I don’t really see why fellowship with people is important.”

Take a look at what God’s Word says about this in Hebrews 10:24-25 (NIV):

*Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

God tells us in this passage that we need other Christians in our life to “spur” us “to love and good deeds.” Just as hot coals on a barbecue grill will soon grow cold if they are separated from the other coals, the enemy wants to sow offenses among Believers so they will lose this vital connection with each other.

No matter how strong we feel in our relationship with God, there will be times when we need the encouragement and support of other Christians. In fact, the Bible tells us to encourage each other on a daily basis:

*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness (Hebrews 3:12-13 NIV).*

More than 30 times in the New Testament, we are told to do something together with “one another.” We are to love one another, serve one another, honor one another, bear one another’s

burdens, pray for one another...and the list goes on. The normal Christian life isn't something for Lone Rangers—God meant for us to have other Christians to walk with on the journey of faith.

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DAY 19

## Avoid Toxic Relationships



Just as Godly Christian friends can be a tremendous encouragement to making this your best year yet, nothing can sabotage your year faster than hanging out with people who are toxic, unbelieving, dishonest, or immoral. As one old preacher admonished his church, “If you sleep with dogs, you’ll wake up with fleas!”

The Apostle Paul warns, “*Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good character’*” (1 Corinthians 15:33 NIV). Note that Satan often uses “*bad company*” to mislead us. Toxic friends are not likely to tell us they want to ruin our life by exposing us to drugs...drunkenness...immorality...STDs...dishonesty...gossip...selfishness...grumbling...or breaches of the law. No, they inevitably come with a sweet siren song that lulls us to sleep and distracts our hearts from the things of God.

Often we deceive ourselves into thinking

we can compromise with worldly and evil ways, while still maintaining a close relationship with God. Paul challenges the Corinthians about this in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15:

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?*

Does this mean we shouldn't associate with any non-Christians? Absolutely not! However, Paul is saying we need to be careful about getting emotionally tangled in close relationships with people who have no intention of following God. We may think we are changing them, but often it's the other way around.

God wants to bless you. His warning against ungodly relationships is intended to spare you from harm and keep you from any influences that will take this year down the wrong path.

Psalm 1:1-3 tells us that God's path of blessing



requires the elimination of relationships that would impair our spiritual growth:

*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*

Rather than letting toxic relationships squeeze you into the world's mold, Psalm 1 encourages us to allow our lives to be shaped by obedience to God's Word.

God wants this year to be a year of great blessing and favor for you!

- Instead of being blown about by the circumstances of life, He wants you to be “*like a tree planted by streams of water.*”

- He wants to help you escape from the winter seasons of life, so you can “*yield...fruit in season.*”
- He wants to bless you so “*whatever [you do] prospers*” making this your best year yet!

Your Heavenly Father knows best, and He *wants* the best for your life. Don't let anything hold you back from His wonderful plan.





DAY 20

# Honor God with Your Finances



Honoring the Lord with your finances is a powerful key for releasing your faith and making this your best year yet. My wife Barbara and I have received testimonies from thousands of Believers who discovered incredible turnaround in their lives as they sowed financial seeds into God's Kingdom.

Solomon, who was probably the richest man in the world in his day, shows the amazing connection between our financial faithfulness and receiving supernatural abundance from God:

*Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine (Proverbs 3:9-10).*

Notice that the Bible says we are to honor the Lord with the “*firstfruits*” of our finances—not the leftovers after all our bills are paid. This kind of obedient giving requires FAITH, because we have to trust God to fulfill His promise to bless those who honor Him with their wealth.

It’s not God’s desire for you to live paycheck to paycheck, struggling to have enough just to pay your bills. God’s desire is to give you more than enough. He wants your life to “*overflow*” with His blessings!

Jesus said in Luke 6:38:

*Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*

This is a great principle. When you give, it will be given back to you. Don’t lose sight of how this works. This verse says by your standard of measure it will be measured back to you in return.

Since the world began, no one has been able to out-give God. He's the owner of the entire universe, and He has an unlimited supply of resources. God owns it all, and when you're in a covenant relationship with Him, you own it all too! The Bible even teaches that God is the One who supplies us with the seeds to plant—so we can reap a great harvest!

*Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).*

This passage doesn't say God provides seeds to everyone—it says He supplies seed to those who are sowers! So the best way to receive a financial breakthrough from God is to set your heart on sowing financial seeds into His Kingdom.

But the promise in this Scripture passage isn't limited to finances. It says that faithful sowers will be "*enriched in EVERY way.*" That's awesome!

Whatever your need is today—whether financial pressures, a broken relationship, an illness, an addiction, or problems on your job—God will miraculously step into your circumstances when you sow your seed!

Whether you need this year to be your best year financially or in some other area, I encourage you to release your faith by sowing your seed to honor the Lord.







DAY 21

## Don't Quit Sowing in Difficult Times



As hard as it may be, one of the most powerful ways to find victory in your winter season is to sow generous financial seeds. This is something my wife Barbara and I have often done in our lives. When we've had a big need, we've sown a big seed. God has done amazing things in response to these simple acts of faith and obedience.

There are numerous examples in Scripture where people made an offering to God in hopes that their seed...their offering...would move the Lord to act on their behalf and respond to their need. I especially love the story about how Isaac sowed in a time of drought and famine.

*There was a famine in the land...  
Then Isaac sowed in that land, and*

*reaped in the same year a hundred-fold; and the Lord blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him (Genesis 26:1, 12-14).*

I don't know about you, but most people have a tendency to hold on to their money, their seed when they don't have enough or when they're worried about how they're going to make ends meet. But not Isaac! He chose to trust God and sow seeds in a time of famine.

Who does that? What farmer sows seeds in the middle of a famine? Famines are usually accompanied by drought. There's been no rain. The ground is hard and seed is precious. Have you ever noticed how acting in faith is almost always contrary to what seems logical and right in the natural world?

Isaac sowed when there was no rain. He sowed when the ground was hard and not

producing anything and he sowed precious seed. The result? He reaped A HUNDRED FOLD in the same year!

Remember: You are a walking warehouse of seed. Everything you have is either enough... your harvest...or it's the seed you need to produce your more-than-enough harvest. I encourage you to begin the habit of sowing seeds. Not just during the difficult or famine seasons of your life, but adopt a lifestyle of sowing and you'll set in motion a lifestyle of reaping.

If you're going through a difficult circumstance in your life—maybe even a desperate one, a “*famine in the land*”—I encourage you to sow a seed for this coming year. Sow it in faith. Sow with expectation and watch what God will do with it! God will use that act of faith to set in motion a harvest this year greater than you've ever seen. It's not just what I think...it's a promise in His Word!

*He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he*

*purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).*

Trust God with your finances, my friend. Keep sowing seeds into His Kingdom even during tough times.





DAY 22

## Reverse Your Negative Situations



There's an interesting story in 1 Chronicles 21 that serves as an example of what you can do to reverse your negative situations.

God had warned King David not to number his people. Why? Because God didn't want David to rest in the strength of his numbers or how big his army was. He wanted him to rest in the strength of his God and how great his God was.

Instead of listening, pride got in David's way. He wanted to know how big his army was, so he had a census conducted to determine the strength of his troops. God was angry at David's disobedience and sent a prophet named Gad to speak to him.

*So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the Lord: 'Choose*

*for yourself, either three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking you, or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.’ Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me”*  
(vs. 11-12).

Wow, these were three pretty bad choices of punishment for David’s disobedience.

*And David said to Gad, “I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man.”*

*So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it (vs. 13-15).*

But as the angel of the Lord was about to destroy the city of Jerusalem, the calamity was

suddenly averted. How was the harsh tide of judgment turned? What can we learn from David's example in seeking God's mercy and finding a year full of grace?

God's angel told David to *“erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.”* David obeyed this word of instruction, and he told Araunah, *“Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the Lord. You shall grant it to me at the full price”* (v. 22).

Araunah told David he could have the land for free, but the king refused this generous offer: *“No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing”* (v. 24).

David's example gives us two great lessons for us today. First, he refused to give an offering to the Lord that cost him nothing! True worship will always cost us something! Our offerings are seeds, and unless they're precious to us, they won't be precious to God either. He will never be pleased with our leftovers.



Second, it was the act of giving God an offering, sowing a financial seed that caused the plague to be stopped and the angel of the Lord to put his sword back in its sheath and not destroy Jerusalem.

So let me ask you: Have you been in a winter season or “plague” of negative circumstances this past year? Perhaps it’s a broken relationship, an illness, a problem with your children, an addiction, or a financial setback. If you want to get unstuck and experience a new beginning this year, I encourage you to follow David’s example and place your sacrificial offering on God’s altar!

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DAY 23

## Start Your Personal Revival



The great American preacher, Charles Finney, was once asked the secret to experiencing a spiritual revival. Finney replied, “A revival is nothing less than a new beginning of obedience to God.”

Take a moment to think about Finney’s words. What would revival look like or feel like in your life? Finney says the secret to a personal revival of the Lord’s presence and blessing in your life is a commitment to obedience to God!

What does being obedient to God really mean? What does it mean to model that in your life? James 1:22-25 seems to talk about this common question:

*Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a*

*man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

James says God's path of blessing is reserved for those who are doers of His Word. Those who merely are hearers are deluding themselves!

Storms of life, difficult experiences, winter seasons are inevitable. They will come both to Believers and unbelievers. The only question is whether or not you'll have a strong spiritual foundation and be ready to withstand these storms of adversity, or will you fall under the weight of them?

In Matthew 7:24-27 Jesus teaches us that those who obey His words will be prepared for life's storms. Look at the stunning contrast between those who hear and obey, and those who merely hear. He says:

*Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.*

Perhaps you're in a difficult circumstance, a storm or winter season in your life today. Or perhaps one is on the way. Regardless, one sure and certain way to overcome the storms of life is to be a doer of the word...to hear the words of Jesus and act on them...and to conform your life to His teachings.

Ask God today to reveal any areas of your life that haven't yet been conformed to His

Word. Make sure you've made Jesus the LORD of your life and not just your Savior from sin. Be a doer of the word. Your turnaround will come when you make a commitment to obey God.

My friend, if you make it your priority to serve God with a heart of obedience, your personal revival will come. God will restore the things Satan has stolen from you. And this year will be your best year yet!





DAY 24

## Quit Fooling Yourself



The pages of Scripture are filled with examples of people deluding themselves with the false belief that they were being obedient, when they clearly weren't.

For example, King Saul was told by God:

*Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey (1 Samuel 15:3).*

Although God's command was clear, Saul chose to compromise and rationalize. He partially obeyed, but failed to realize this crucial principle: Partial obedience is partial disobedience! The story in 1 Samuel 15 continues:

*Saul attacked the Amalekites, from*



*Havilah all the way to Shur, which is east of Egypt. He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed (vs. 7-9).*

Saul partially obeyed God. He obeyed the part that sounded good to him and conveniently disobeyed the part he didn't like and the part that didn't suit his own best interests. Yet when the prophet Samuel came to confront King Saul about his disobedience, Saul greeted him with a confident proclamation, "*I have performed the commandment of the Lord*" (v. 13).

How sad! Saul seems to have even deceived himself into sincerely believing he had obeyed God! But in verse 14 Samuel challenges Saul with the facts: "*What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?*"

Instead of utterly destroying the Amalekites and their property, as the Lord had commanded, the evidence showed that Saul had intentionally and conveniently disobeyed.

Even after being confronted with the truth, Saul wasn't done with his rationalizations. He protested that the best of the sheep and oxen had been spared in order to sacrifice them to the Lord!

Samuel's reply to Saul should be a sobering message to each of us today:

*Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king (vs. 22-23).*

My friend, don't forfeit your future today. Don't forfeit His blessings in your life and what could be your best year yet by picking and

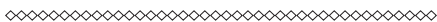
choosing the parts of His word you feel good about...the parts that suit your lifestyle...and overlook the entirety of what God says to you.





DAY 25

# The Hidden Key of Obedience



The theme of obedience is found throughout the Bible. Speaking to us through Isaiah in chapter 1:19-20, God says:

*If you are willing and obedient,  
you will eat the good things of the  
land; but if you resist and rebel,  
you will be devoured by the sword.  
For the mouth of the LORD has  
spoken.*

The 28th chapter of Deuteronomy and many other passages throughout the Bible describe incredible blessings for those who obey God's voice and His Word, as well as curses upon those who disobey. Your joy, your peace, your blessings from God, the course of your life this year depends on the decisions you make today and

every day to live your life in alignment with the things Jesus asks of you!

God sets a very clear choice in front of each of us. Speaking to us in Deuteronomy chapter 30, He says:

*See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess.*

*I call heaven and earth as witnesses*

*today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them (vs. 15-20).*

What choice will you make today? Life or death? The blessing or the curse? By loving the Lord, by walking in His ways, by keeping His commandments, you are “choosing life” and God’s abundant blessings.

I encourage you to take some time today to meditate on God’s promises and warnings in Deuteronomy chapters 28 and 30. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart, whether to encourage your faith or to prompt you to re-evaluate the choices and decisions you make each day in doing the things Jesus ask you to do.

If you truly want this to be your best year yet, ask the Lord to show you any areas of your life where you have rationalized His instructions, or gone your own way and done your own thing. Commit yourself today to a life of obedience. Put a stake in the ground like Joshua did when he said, *“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*



## NOTES

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DAY 26

# Don't Let Anything Hold You Back



Many people wonder if it's possible for God to give them a new beginning. I've heard more than one person say to me, "I've made too many wrong decisions for God to forgive me."

Such people may have heard the message that God loves them and is willing to forgive their sins, wipe away their past, give them a fresh start. But somehow they are convinced their situation is just too bleak for God to do that for them. Maybe God can do that for someone else but not for them. They tell me, "David, if you knew what I've done, or if you knew what I'm going through, you'd realize it's hopeless."

My friend, let me encourage you today God has a track record when it comes to turning things around. For thousands of years, He's

shown Himself as the God of redemption, taking sinful, defeated, and broken people and putting the pieces of their lives back together again.

So, let me ask you: What will make this year your best year yet?

If you look through the pages of the Bible you'll find example after example of people, just like you, who found the new beginning they needed through trusting, loving, and obeying God and His instructions:

- Remember **Joseph**, who forgave his jealous brothers even though they had thrown him into a well and sold him into slavery.
- Remember **Jabez**, who overcame a difficult childhood. Jabez cried out to God for a new beginning of prosperity and blessing, and God blessed him indeed.
- Remember the story of **Naomi and Ruth**, who found a new life when they moved back to Judah.
- Remember **David**, who received God's forgiveness and cleansing after

committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering her husband Uriah.

- Remember the **widow at Zarephath**, who found God's supernatural provision when despite her own need. She obeyed the word of the prophet Elijah, and God supernaturally provided for her and her entire household for three years.
- Remember **Naaman**, the Syrian general who was healed of leprosy when he obeyed the prophet Elisha's instructions and dipped seven times in the Jordan River.
- Remember how Jesus set the **demon-possessed** man free from Satan's bondage.
- Remember **Nicodemus**, who learned that he needed to be born again.
- Remember the **Prodigal Son**, who found open arms of acceptance when he made a decision to return to his father's house.

All these people—and many, many more—received a turnaround from God. They were just ordinary people who cried out to an extraordinary God.

Take time today to cry out to the God of the universe and watch for the great things He will do for you. This really *can* be your year of new beginnings, breakthroughs, and your best year ever!





DAY 27

## Cultivate an Attitude of Gratitude



An “attitude of gratitude” is an important part of making this your best year yet. You’ll find thankfulness is a powerful tool for receiving God’s favor and blessings in your life.

The Apostle Paul wrote:

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18).*

He also connected thankfulness to finding relief from anxiety and discovering God’s amazing peace in your life.

*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let*

*your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*

*Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you (Philippians 4:6-9).*

Take a few minutes right now to meditate on the things in your life that are “*praiseworthy*.” Give thanks to the Lord for what He has already done in your life. This is exactly what David did in Psalm 103 when he said:



*Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's (vs. 1-5).*

Luke 17:11-19 tells the story of 10 lepers who were healed by Jesus. All of them had cried out to Him, saying, “*Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!*” All of these men were healed, but only one of them responded with gratitude.

Jesus was stunned that only one of these 10 men bothered to return and say thanks. He told the man, “*Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.*” While all the men were cured of their leprosy, the one who returned to gratefully give glory to God seems to have received an added dimension of healing and restoration. His trans-

formation involved not just a physical healing, but a spiritual and emotional one as well.

Friend, I encourage you to give thanks to God at all times and in every circumstance. His healing, life-changing love can be yours today and all throughout the year.

## NOTES

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DAY 28

## Take the Next Step



We can learn a lot from the story of four men told in 2 Kings 7. They each received an incredible new beginning from God. These men were in a truly desperate situation. First of all, they were lepers, and as a result, outcasts. Second, their city was under attack. And finally, they were literally starving to death.

It wasn't a pretty picture. Hope was nearly gone. They were in a state of complete and utter desperation. Perhaps you've experienced similar times in your own life.

Yet, in the midst of their despair, these men had an idea. "*Why are we sitting here until we die?*" they asked each other (v. 3). They realized that if they just sat there and did nothing, they would surely die. So they decided to take the risky move of going to the camp of their enemies, the Arameans. They said to themselves, "*If they keep us*

*alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die*" (v. 4). Since they were on the brink of death anyway they figured they had nothing to lose.

To the shock of these four lepers, when they reached the camp of the Arameans, they discovered that the camp had been abandoned. Their step of faith—born of desperation—reaped an unbelievable harvest of silver, gold, clothes, and other bounty, not only for themselves but for their entire nation!

These men would surely have died if they had stayed at the outskirts of the city, grumbling, complaining, blaming others, and full of self-pity for their plight. But they took action—bold action—and received an incredible blessing from God.

Friend, sometimes turning things around in your life requires a step of faith. Maybe that's a geographical move...or the sowing of a financial seed. Perhaps an act of forgiveness and reconciliation...or a season of prayer and fasting. Naaman had to dip seven times in the Jordan, the woman with the issue of blood had to touch Jesus' cloak, and Job needed to pray for his friends.

Sometimes we're waiting on God to deliver us from some kind of difficult situation, when He's waiting on US to obey the voice of His Spirit and take action! As you pray for God's intervention in your circumstances, make sure you're listening to His instructions on what you're supposed to do.

As you're sensitive to the voice of God's Spirit, He will show you the steps YOU need to take to make this year your best year yet. Don't procrastinate. Don't make excuses or blame others for your past. Don't give up asking God for the breakthrough you need.

You have a Heavenly Father who loves you deeply. He has a fantastic plan for your life. He wants to empower you with His Holy Spirit and give you every resource you need for an abundant life in Christ.

God will be faithful to give you a new beginning. And He'll be faithful to continue His work of transformation in your life all throughout this year. Remember God's wonderful promise in Philippians 1:6: *"He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ."*





DAY 29

## Take Hold of the Promises of God



The Bible is God's Word, and it is filled with hundreds and hundreds of promises about how you and I can experience an abundant life, full of blessings and breakthroughs. The Bible says in Romans 8:37 (NIV), "*In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.*"

Friend, I encourage you to take time to read, meditate on, and memorize promises like these:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases (Psalm 103:2-3).*

*I have been young, and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous*



*forsaken, nor his descendants  
begging bread (Psalm 37:25).*

*The LORD is my shepherd, I shall  
not want (Psalm 23:1).*

*He heals the brokenhearted and binds  
up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).*

I could go on quoting you the promises from God in His Word! When you give your life to Christ and follow His instructions, ALL of these promises—and many more—belong to YOU! Yet in order to activate God's promises in your life, you need to believe them in your heart and then declare them with your mouth.

Don't miss this crucial step, my friend. Solomon writes in Proverbs 18:21, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit.*"

Think of it: Your WORDS hold the power of life or death!

That's why Jesus taught us in Matthew 17:20 to SPEAK to the mountains and problems in our lives: "*I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from*

*here to there,' and it will move; and **nothing** will be impossible for you."*

What a fantastic promise! Do you have a specific "*mountain*" or problem in your life that has been hindering you? Then find a promise in the Word of God today, and speak to your problem and tell it that it has to move! Don't be timid or bashful. Speak boldly, trusting in the power of God, and your mountain **MUST** move out of your way!

My friend, the Bible says in Hebrews 11:3 that God spoke the entire universe into existence. Speak the promises of God's Word for your life over this coming year. His Words are powerful—and so are your words when you speak the promises of Scripture.





DAY 30

# Meditate on God's Word



Today is the final day of the 30-day journey we've been on to discover how you can experience your best year ever. I'm convinced God will change your life and give you a new beginning through the truths in His Word I've shared during these past 30 days as you step out in faith and act on them.

Whenever you're studying something—it could be anything—it's important to review what you've studied, meditate on it, and, finally...do something with what you've learned...put it into practice...act. It's one thing to read about something, or hear a message, even something you completely agree with, but it's another thing to *do* something with what you've read or heard.

Many Believers misunderstand what the Bible teaches about meditating on God's Word. They think of other forms of meditation, such as

the mystical practices of Eastern religions. However, Biblical meditation is not only good for you, but absolutely necessary to your spiritual growth.

If you want to receive the full benefit from what you read in the Bible or hear preached, you need to meditate on it. Or, said another way, you must spend some time thinking about it...pondering it...and absorbing it into your spirit.

The Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13 describes why this is important. Verse 19 says:

*When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.*

According to this verse, when Scripture doesn't become an integral part of our life—when it's not understood or applied—the enemy comes and immediately steals it from us. Satan's goal is to rob you of one of the most important sources of your spiritual growth: God's Word.

Know this: None of the time you spend with the Lord and His Word is ever wasted. You always

come away renewed and refreshed!

Scripture clearly tells us to meditate on the truth of the Word until it sinks deeply into the soil of our heart. Joshua 1:8 (NIV) says:

*Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be **prosperous** and **successful**.*

What an outstanding promise! When you meditate on God's Word, you will be "*prosperous and successful*." Those are two adjectives I pray will describe your life this coming year.

Remember: God will give you HIS best when you give YOUR best to Him.

God bless you!

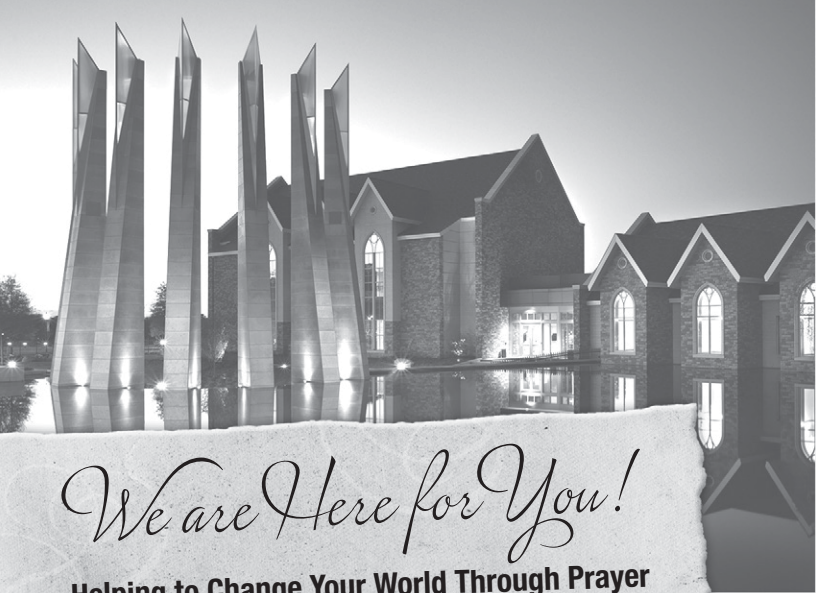


## ABOUT DAVID CERULLO



David Cerullo is the Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Inspiration Ministries located in Indian Land, South Carolina — a ministry dedicated to impacting people for Christ worldwide through media since 1990. David took a less traditional approach to ministry, graduating from Oral Roberts University with a degree in business administration and management. He has authored more than 15 different books and has been honored with an honorary Doctor of Ministry degree. He is married to his wife Barbara for more than 40 years, and together they have two adult children and five grandchildren.





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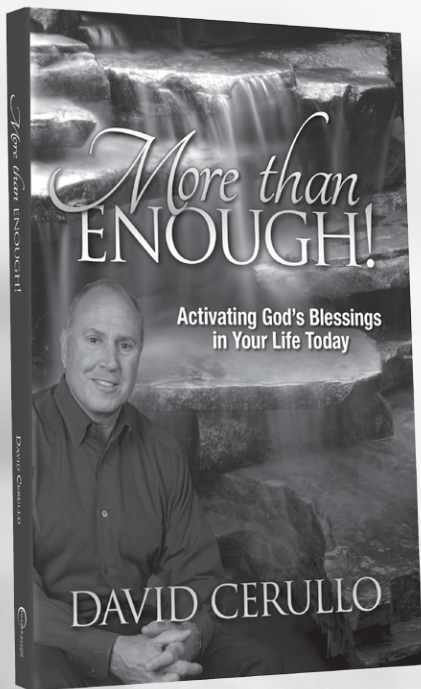
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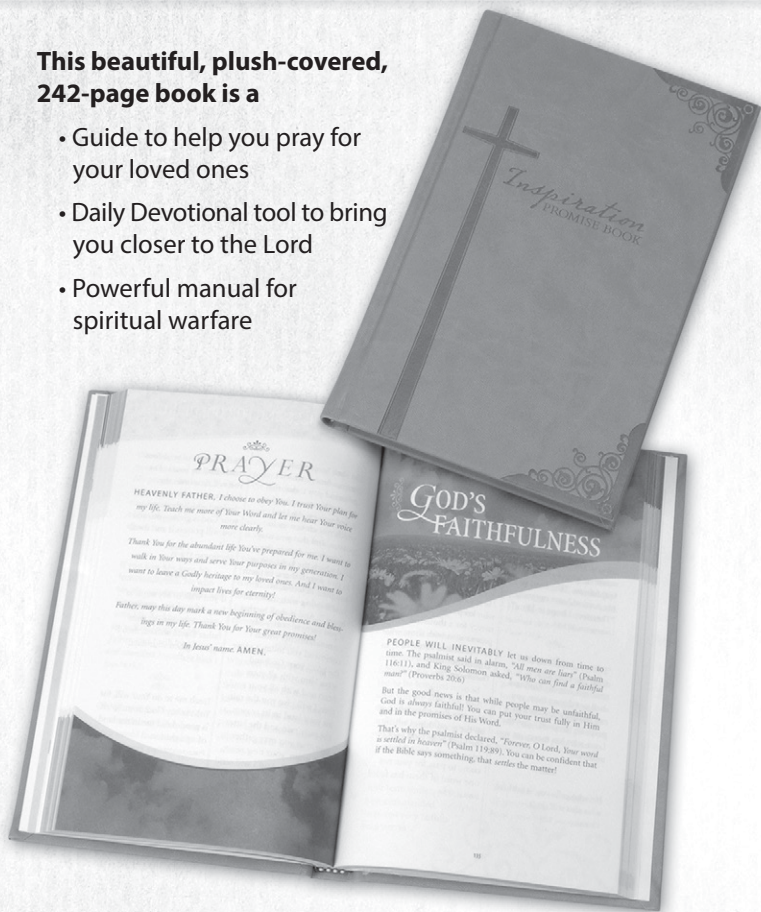
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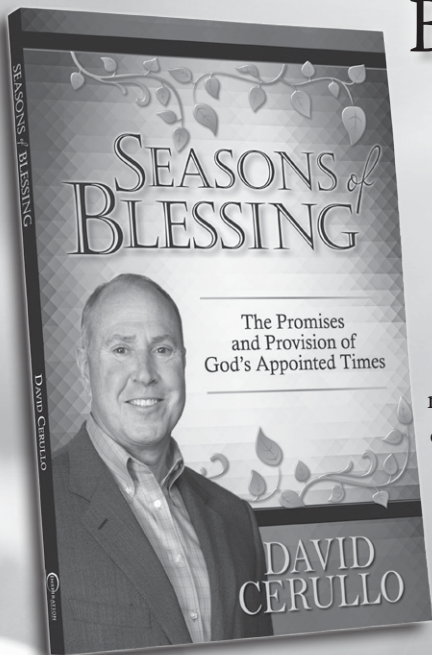
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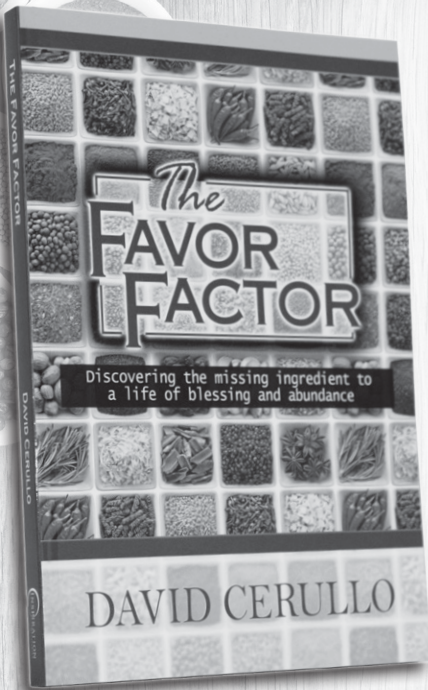
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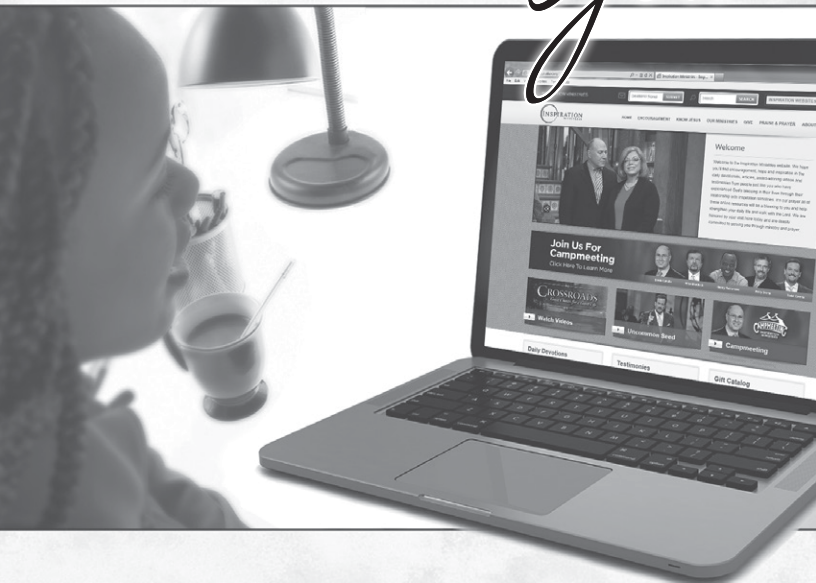
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